

CROSSING THE FENCE

(Thoughts of a 1st. Generation Immigrant)

It took a long time to accept
that he was here to stay -- in this

old body which he'll now have to keep
for the rest of his life;

and that he'd die in this country:
that his last great wish would be to go

peacefully. Trips to the Greek Islands
weren't for him. Supersonic travel

was a spectator sport; yet the British
Rail Express from Euston to Manchester

was consolation of sorts. Engineering
and Art and the price of his vote

had turned the coachwork into a poor man's
Concorde, a flight of imagination

with space for luggage. Surely, he was
being conveyed more graciously than ever

Queen Victoria managed: had he mellowed
into thinking there were degrees

to poverty; that being able, say, to exchange
the canefields of youth for inner-city manhood

was a plus? On his way to the loo he noticed
an ugly rent on one of the seats

and two smug-looking truants sheltering
behind the generation gap. Suddenly,

a distant war had spilled over into
his territory, and Philpot was going to fight.

-- Paul St Vincent

Hull, England